

<< TESTIMONY ON SB2308 >>  
Reverend Carel Two-Eagle, PK, PB,  
Church of the Helping Hand, Inc.

Good morning Chairwoman Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is the Reverend Carel Two-Eagle. I am a Pipe Keeper of us Lakota People and I am also the Presiding Bishop of a non-denominational non-sectarian Church. That is, a non-Christian church. I am here in opposition to SB2308.

I responded spontaneously to testimony in favor of this bill, but my testimony should be in the physical record, so there can be no question of the point of view of us who do not claim Christianity and its ten commandments as the basis of our religious view, nor should we or our children be forced to.

The prime sponsor of this bill claimed that posting the ten commandments in schools would be "a reminder" of them – to people (children) she said have not been exposed to them, let alone taught them. This is not true. If a population has not been "exposed" to these commandments, let alone "taught" them, it cannot be reminded of them. It can only be taught them. Posting the ten commandments that are claimed to be the guiding principles of Christianity in public places other than schools may be a reminder, but schools exist for teaching various subjects. Thus such a posting is illegal under federal law.

The prime sponsor also said that the United States "is a Christian country" and that it was intended to be so from inception. This is also not true. The US has never been, nor should it ever be, a "Christian" country. Use of the word "God" does not contain any inherent claim by Christianity. Every religion has one or more aspects of "god". Capitalization is irrelevant. It does not give any prior right to Christianity over any other religious Way. The US Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld that the US is not a "Christian" country. There are a few decisions to the contrary, but they are distinctly in the minority.

Thomas Jefferson was a Deist. He was not Christian. George Washington was a Mason. He attended church services, but he was not a Christian, according to his own writings. Most of the other founders of the US were not Christian, which is why they specifically included wording that "Congress shall make no law regarding establishment of a Religion of State" in the Constitution.

Did the founders respect God and the Christian religion? Yes. Were they influenced by the Bible? Yes. Were they all born-again believers in Jesus Christ? No. Thomas

Paine was not a Christian; in his work *The Age of Reason*, he attacked the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. Yet he was a major figure in the establishment of the Constitution and the country it frames.

There is ample evidence that Washington was only nominal in his faith (Anglican). Thomas Jefferson made statements implying he might be a Christian, but his brand of Christianity was dubious, at best. Jefferson rejected the supernatural accounts of the Bible, the Trinity, and the incarnation of Christ. James Madison was Anglican, but he also argued to be a Deist. These are not the only examples.

Within Christianity, various versions have killed each other! - for centuries, in some cases, such as the Irish - over whether Protestantism or Catholicism was the more correct version. How ridiculous.

Because these people were of such a diverse base in re religion, they made sure to have no Religion of State, and to provide for everyone to believe - or not - as they were moved. As a Pipe Keeper, I know that The Most Intimate Thing any human ever does is connect with his or her vision of god-head. There is no more fundamental or important individual freedom.

We Indigenous of this Turtle Island have been persecuted since the first Europeans came to our land in 1493. The lost Italian made sex slaves of Native men, women, and children, and wrote that the Taino (and by extension, all other Indigenous of this land) were not human. How arrogant. How disrespectful! This bill is in the same vein.

The first 'settlements' by Europeans were saved from annihilation by local Natives - and were 'rewarded' by the supposedly Christian Europeans by laws that made it a killing offense for the Natives to hunt or gather the very foods they had taught the invaders about so they could stay alive. Which commandment does that break, I wonder? Thou shalt not murder, perhaps?

The list of commandments broken by the invaders to our Eden is long. It includes the first biological warfare here - blankets laced with smallpox by "Christians". Look up what smallpox does to the body - but don't eat beforehand. The boarding school system - where Native children were tortured and killed by "Christians".. in the name of 'civilization', run by supposedly Christian people at the behest of the US government.

The worst of the boarding schools was Wittenberg, which is almost never mentioned because of the atrocities committed there. Wittenberg had the highest death rate of Native children of all of the boarding schools, and the death camp in Germany of the same name was patterned after it. Hitler sent a letter to FDR praising him for the concentration camps we call Reservations today. He told FDR that he had one flaw in them – no ovens. Thankfully, FDR ignored Hitler's advice in this regard.

Native males were tortured by such means as sewing the foreskin shut until the penis became so infected that many males died. "Christians" in this supposedly Christian country did this. I married a man who was a victim of these boarding schools. The base ½" or so of his penis could become erect. The rest of it could not. At the junction of these two areas was an indentation where a piece of store string could be fitted. He said the boarding school "Christians" did that to him. Why? To discipline him for speaking his heritage language.

I am proud of the fact that I may be the only Indian on Turtle Island to have been expelled from a boarding school & ordered to "NEVER COME BACK!" by the head. I proudly replied, "That is my aim!"

The prime sponsor of this bill claims that the ten commandments teach all sorts of good things and that "all" Christians follow them. This is patent hogwash. "All" of any Way don't do anything identically, and we have already seen that is true of Christianity.

The prime sponsor remarked that those who do not follow the Jesus road are atheists. Nothing could be further from the truth. Muslims are hardly atheists, for example. *Millions* of us Natives have died to preserve and protect our Traditional spiritual / religious Ways. Our Traditional spiritual / religious Ways were illegal for nearly 100 years until the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 supposedly gave us back our "rights". It did not – we Traditional people are the only group on earth that has to go through protocols to get some of the materials that are essential for our ceremonies yet today. Eagle feathers, for example.

I have been attacked by so-called Christians who pointed at me and ranted, "You worship DEMONS! You eat babies!" It has happened in my driveway, it has even happened in a bank. My reply has always been, "Do eggs count?" since eggs are baby birds-in-the-making. There is an Oriental delicacy that cooks chicks in their eggs, by the way.

The US Supreme Court decreed in 1972 that "Rights are inherent, and cannot be given or taken away by anyone, including the individual whose rights they are".

The Doctrine of Separation of Church and State is not a federal law, but it has assumed the force of law over time, which is good. The Doctrine of Over-Arching Authority of the federal over the states is related, and supports it.

There are a huge number of additional examples of atrocities against us Indigenous people of this Turtle Island that I could give, but I do not need to.

SB2308 will not withstand a court test. It will waste North Dakota government money that would be far better spent on other activities than fighting a groundless, ignorant, losing battle to proselytize a religious Way. After all, the Creator made all the various religions and spiritual Ways because one size never did fit all, and it never will.

Give SB2308 a resounding Do NOT PASS recommendation. It is disrespectful of the most basic of all freedoms – that of how an individual connects with his or her vision of the Creator. Thank you for hearing me in a good way now. I am always available to answer any questions.